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97

# COLLECTED SONGS AND LYRICS

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

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SONGS TO DESIDERIA

and other Lyrics

MEMORIES

VIVISECTION

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GREAT TESTIMONY

THE IDOLATRY OF SCIENCE

LETTERS TO MY GRANDSON. 4 vols.

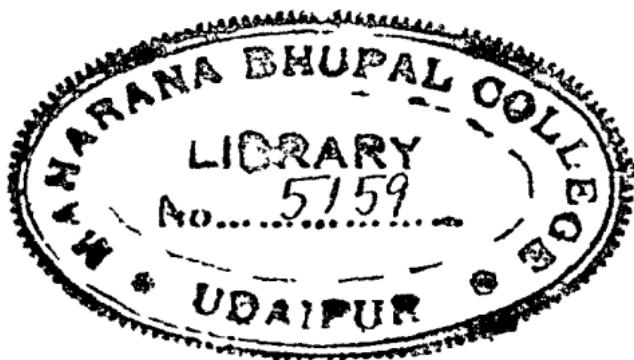
FAMOUS VICTORIANS I HAVE KNOWN

# COLLECTED SONGS AND LYRICS

By

The Hon<sup>ble.</sup>

STEPHEN COLERIDGE



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## PREFACE

THERE must, I suppose, be some who will regard the projection upon the public of a volume of verse by one of my name as savouring of audacity.

Did I bear a name unknown, the critics would approach the volume with kindly condescension—

“Stat magni nominis umbra,”

and the umbra becomes the more oppressive with the magnitude of the name.

But I recall the successful temerity of Hartley Coleridge, who ventured to appear on the lower slopes of Parnassus, upon the lofty summit of which his father reposed, and stimulated by that example I place my timorous foot upon the lovely mountain whose top is lost in glory.

Some of the songs in this book have become familiar to the public by being lifted from obscurity by the beautiful art of the musician.

Others still await that felicitous adornment.

I now submit them all to the praise, censure or neglect of the world.

S. C.

“ I have seen the day

That I have worn a visor ; and could tell  
A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear  
Such as would please ;—'tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone ! ”

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# COLLECTED SONGS AND LYRICS

## SAPPHICS TO THE NIGHTINGALE

Down through the ages comes that voice of sorrow,  
Sorrow and burning passion intermingled.

Ah ! piteous bird ! you fill my soul with anguish  
With your lamenting !

Hark to the yearning of those welling love notes,  
Heart-ache and longing poured upon the night air,  
Filling the deep sequestered lonely woodlands  
With tender beauty.

Under the stars immutable above me,  
Silent, serene, untouched by pain or passion,  
Here in the dusk I listen to the music,—  
Love's consecration.

Cease ! cease those notes that, like the distant echo  
Of a far flute across the lake's still waters,  
From the lost world bring back the voice long perished  
Of my belovèd.

## THE FAITHFUL FRIEND

I HAVE a friend, a better friend has none,  
As faithful as a dial to the sun.

When evil days or happy days betide  
That loving friend is ever at my side.

When wealth is mine, alike my friend is there  
As when disaster brings me to despair ;  
And when I still have nothing left to give  
He stays with me my spirits to revive.

If for a little while we are apart  
His joyous welcome home delights my heart ;  
When other friends turn cold and go their way,  
He clings the closer to me night and day.

I know that when I die he will be found  
Alone where they have left me in the ground,  
For when a-down life's stairway I descend  
My dog will be my last and truest friend.

## JOHN AND I

HE brought me up the cottage path  
And told me of his love,  
And the fire flickered on his hearth  
And on the beams above.

It was not to a lordly house  
All built of marble stone ;  
But the settle in the chimney nook  
It was to me a throne.

And there upon the floor I sank  
My face upon his knee,  
And drew his comely head a-down  
In silence tenderly.

Oh ! trumpets for the stately lord,  
And banners for his bride ;  
But the kettle singing on the hob  
Where John and I abide.

For us the little casement panes  
Amid the jasmine bowers,  
And the murmur of the busy bees  
Among the sunny flowers.

## SLEEP

QUIET hours are the best  
When the sun goes to his rest,  
Comforted are mourner's sighs  
Neath the deep star-spangled skies ;  
    Dreaming there  
    Lost to care,  
Those that sleep need ne'er despair.

Girls and boys throughout the world,  
In their downy couches curled,  
Soon forget their little woes  
When the nurse tucks up their toes ;  
    Dreaming there  
    Lost to care,  
Those that sleep need ne'er despair.

Men and women growing old  
Peace of mind to folly sold,  
Trouble takes them for her own,  
Till at night they lay them down ;  
    Dreaming there  
    Lost to care,  
Those that sleep need ne'er despair.

## TO THOSE AT HOME

SOLITARY on the steep  
Of the distant shore I stand,  
And across the heaving deep  
I stretch out a loving hand.

Trackless wastes may intervene,  
Touch and see we cannot yet,  
Time and space offend between  
By the bonds of body set.

But the mind no fetters knows  
And the heart is free to roam,  
All around the world it goes  
To the door of its own home.

## APRIL

THE life begins to stir  
    The seed in the dark earth,  
The twigs along the hedge  
    Awake into new birth.

The Sun-god climbs the sky,  
    The wind is in the West,  
The robin pipes his love  
    To sweetheart on her nest.

Ah ! happy little birds  
    That mate and kiss and part,  
To you spring never sings  
    Songs to a heavy heart.

## SUMMER IS COMING

ALL the world is blossoming  
Mid the sun and showers,  
In the garden such a sight,  
All a romp of flowers !

Little larks sing up and up  
In the sky above,  
Pouring out their happy hearts  
Throbbing full of love.

Far away quite out of sight  
Winter lurks ahead,  
And a long long way behind  
His dark days have fled.

Summer, summer, summer, summer  
Drives away all sorrow ;  
God be thanked for the long days,  
Never mind to-morrow.

## TIME'S GUERDON

WHEN love first rises on the soul  
And lifts it to the skies,  
The whole wide world transfigured is  
To the impassioned eyes.

The sea and land, the sun and moon,  
And every star above,  
The fields and streams and far-off hills,  
All seem to speak of Love.

But Time comes with his slow footfall  
Still with intent to bless,  
And daily custom tames the pulse  
To quiet tenderness,

And so the lovers of the past  
Together, hand in hand,  
Pass down the years in sweet accord  
Into the silent land.

## THE SURRENDER !

LORD of my trembling heart, I yield to thee,  
The fight is over, I am spent and faint ;  
In vain, in vain I prayed not to desire  
And shut the door against love's fierce complaint.

No more can I forbid my King his throne  
Or save myself from sinking at his feet,—  
Lift me in thy strong arms and hold me close,  
My Conqueror ! Is the surrender sweet ?

## THE FAREWELL

I'LL ask no more: nay, for my manhood's sake  
That which thou dost not give I will not need;  
The tribute of my pain, thou shalt not take  
Where love is gone, 'twere better to be freed.

Then let us part; I will not crave a kiss  
From those soft lips where sweetest falsehoods dwell,  
Nor will I stay to see another's bliss,  
The world is wide enough for me! Farewell!

## THE FORGOTTEN CHIEFTAINS

I CAME across Schehallion  
And down to Rannoch's shore,  
But all the Chieftains of the vale  
They could be found no more.

The Robertsons of Struan,  
The Menzies of the moor,  
The Macdonalds of Loch Tummel,  
The Stewarts proud and poor.

They taxed them all when living,  
They taxed them still when dead,  
Till debts and loans and mortgages  
Had left them not a shred.

Their ancient halls and homesteads  
Were sold by auctioneers,  
And now disdainful mountains  
Look down on profiteers.

One little sacred foothold  
Was left out of their sales,  
The graveyards of the vanished Chiefs  
Above their lovely vales.

And there upon the mountain side  
The tall firs vigil keep,  
Till God shall call them to Himself,  
Forgotten, where they sleep.

DECEMBER 1914

THE Chieftain wandered to the Loch  
And stood upon the shore,  
And dreamed of his lost bonny son  
Who'd range the hills no more.

He thought of all his ancestry  
Far stretching in the past,  
With none to follow in his steps  
Of all his race, the last.

The chilly waves made murmuring sounds  
Upon the pebbles bare,  
The wintry wind came roughly by  
And lifted his white hair.

The Loch was shining in the sun  
Careless of human ills,  
And all around in snowy shrouds  
The everlasting hills.

Long, long he stood there all alone  
And gazed across the mere  
Still as a statue carved in stone,  
Wrapt in a gloom austere.

At last he turned with stately tread  
And sought his empty hearth,  
And never more came forth till borne  
Along the graveyard path.

## THE SOUTHERN CROSS

WHEN I sailed down the tropic seas  
With land far out of sight,  
I watched the mast-head swaying round  
Among the stars at night.

As down and down across the world  
We dropped from day to day,  
The sweet old constellations gleamed  
Fainter and sank away.

Night after night far to the north  
Swung lower the Great Bear,  
And fading dim there followed him  
The lovely Cassiopeia.

Till far across the Southern skies,  
For reverent eyes to see,  
In majesty the great cross rose  
Out of the heaving sea.

## DIDO AND ÆNEAS

WHEN Dido sailed the classic Seas  
In search of territory,  
She founded Carthage, that should fill  
The ancient world with glory.

But love o'ertook her valiant heart  
When bold Æneas wooed her,  
Because that crafty one alone  
Among men, understood her.

But, faithless rogue, he sailed away,  
As others had before him;  
And left the love-lorn weeping queen  
In sorrow to deplore him.

So constant man it seems must rank  
With Life's impossibilities,  
And Dido now proclaims the fact  
Among the old divinities.

## PENELOPE AND ULYSSES

OLD Homer called Penelope  
A chaste and faithful wife,  
Although Ulysses left her for  
The best part of her life.

She kept her suitors all at bay  
By weaving in their sight  
A lovely web, the threads of which  
She undid every night.

Ulysses homeward bent his steps  
When twenty years had flown,  
And only to the blind old dog  
Was his dear master known.

Penelope, the constant, was  
Rewarded to the full,  
He shot the suitors with his bow  
Which none of them could pull.

So ladies all, though left awhile,  
Still ever faithful be,  
And weave a web about your hearts  
As did Penelope.

## CUPID AND PSYCHE

WHEN lovely Psyche, overcome  
By female curiosity,  
Slipped off at night and with a lamp  
Disclosed her Love's divinity ;

The beauty of the little god  
So stirred her admiration,  
She dropped hot oil upon his neck  
In her precipitation.

Away fled Cupid, and no more  
Gave to his Psyche kisses,  
Because she would not take on trust  
Such more than mortal blisses.

Of this sad tale of ancient days  
The moral is notorious :  
That love will sometimes fly away  
If ladies are too curious.

## EVENING SAPPHICS

FAR in the West the burning day is dying,  
Venus is floating in a bed of glory,  
Down in the vale the nightingale is singing  
    In the dim twilight.

Up from the East the golden moon is rising,  
Over the sluice the quiet water whispers,  
In the cool dusk the roses round the casement  
    Sway in the night-wind.

In the deep stillness through the silent wood-walk  
All in the haunting breathless hour of passion,  
Nearer and nearer comes the longed-for footfall  
    Of my beloved.

**GLORIA**

## GLORIA

WHEN in the far-off years,  
You dream by the candle light,  
In the old chair by the fire  
Through the lonely winter night,  
As you chant my verse you will murmur :  
“ Love to youth belongs  
And 'twas once for the love of me  
The poet sang his songs.”

*(From the French of RONSARD.)*

## HOPE

### I

LOVE is a god ! he will not stay our bidding ;  
Time soon will lay his heavy hand upon us ;  
Then let us drain the brimming cup of pleasure  
Ere it be tasteless !

He is the patron of the young and happy.  
Kissed lips are softest in life's dewy morning ;  
Then let us pluck the roses in our springtime,  
While they smell sweetly.

Love let us sing ! who builds the fallen palace ;  
Sovran creator in a world of ruin,  
Breath of all poets, glory of all women,  
Love let us honour.

Praise him in the vernal hours,  
Monarch of the budding flowers ;  
Cup him till the feasters nod ;  
Worship him—he is a god !

# HOPE

## II

OVER the mountains in the sun  
    The blazing path to climb,  
Down through the deep cool chestnut woods  
    In passion's summer-time ;  
Over the lake of Coniston  
    Fair Gloria to row,  
With the dancing heart of sweet nineteen  
    That loved me long ago !

We cross the waters in a dream  
    And coast the farther shore,  
We moor the boat and mount the slope  
    And near the poet's door,  
Till at the gate with one soft touch  
    And one glance of her eye,  
I know her for the loveliest thing  
    Under the wide wide sky !

III

SEE ! as she walks the flowers bow before her  
Where she is passing down the stately garden.  
Ah ! my heart fails ; my eyes dare not adventure  
    Into such glory !

Nearer and nearer come her gentle footsteps,  
Till I can hear the softness of her vesture,  
Till I can feel her very breath upon me  
    Where I am kneeling.

Here stay I prostrate without word or motion :  
I dare not speak lest my rough words disturb her,  
Though at her feet lie life, soul, and body,  
    To do her bidding.

Onward she moves adown the pleasant wood-walks,  
Through gleam and shadow thrown by swaying  
    branches.

Ah ! she has gone and breathed no word of pity !  
    I am forsaken.

HOPE (writing on paper)

IV

CALLOW care, to others fly,  
Dwell not in my lady's eye;  
Sorrow, with your hollow cheek,  
Go, some sterner victim seek.

Crabbèd age, with wrinkled laugh,  
Limping on your crooked staff,  
Never on my lady's face  
Dare your cruel lines to trace.

Love, be her companion sweet;  
Gently guide her dainty feet;  
Put to shame the spangled skies  
Gazing from her tender eyes.

HOPE

V

THAT Time should one day wan that face  
And dim those glorious eyes,  
That Death should ever dare embrace  
A spirit from the skies,  
Are all that gave my fainting heart  
A chance for pity there,  
Where I have played the suppliant's part,  
Refusing to despair !

Perhaps thou wilt not deign to mourn  
Or care when I am gone,  
While I with this last song must turn  
And face my fate alone.  
Perhaps into a world I go  
Where men think not nor weep,  
A place where love has drowned its woe  
And where the broken sleep !

## HOPE

### VI

HER beauty showed, as God intended,  
Her gentle mind's reflections ;  
Her very loveliness offended  
Our mortal imperfections.

And though the gift of Pentecost  
Were mine, I could but wait,  
Prone like a spirit of the lost,  
Silent at Heaven's gate.

## FULFILMENT

### I

FAR up the river through the sunny meadows,  
Heaven and earth attending on her beauty,  
Gloria floats reclining like a Dryad  
Lost in a day-dream.

Long as the blazing noon is passing westward  
Under the trees we sit among the fern-brakes,  
There of the world forgetful and forgotten  
Plucking the lotus.

Then in the evening down the peaceful waters  
Homeward we glide with sleepy rhythmic splashing,  
Gloria silent, by the tangled wood-walks  
Sweetly dishevelled.

On his last flight the droning beetle hurries,  
Out of the east the purple night arises,  
Lonely in Heaven above the amber sun-glow  
Rapturous Venus.

Quitting the oars I lay me down before her ;  
On her pure hand my lips profane adventure ;  
Into her soul a pang of pity enter :  
I am forgiven.

Stars in the sky above us dance for gladness ;  
Over the world the night wind sighs with passion,  
Breathing her name, my Queen, my Queen for ever,  
Gloria regnans !

# FULFILMENT

## II

UP through love's infinite ascent  
I climbed from steep to steep ;  
Into her soul I poured my own—  
'Twas deep calling to deep—  
Till in the silence of that night  
'Neath the stars we stood alone :  
She turned and gave herself to me,  
And her sweet lips touched my own.

## FULFILMENT

### III

THE joys laid up hereafter,  
For the spirits of the just,  
May pass man's understanding  
Till dust returns to dust ;  
But in this flesh corruptible  
With love's first kiss arise  
Visions transfiguring the earth  
Into a Paradise.

## SEPARATION

### I

LAST night we parted at the gate  
Where Love with us had often sat ;  
Hand linked in hand we went forlorn  
Adown the pathway through the corn ;  
One longing clasp of breast to breast,  
One choking sob told all the rest !  
Our sun went down ; no hope, no light !  
Last night, last night !

Oh ! halting tongue, attempt no speech  
When hearts are severed each from each ;  
Oh ! anguish inarticulate,  
When soul from soul is separate.  
Dark and alone my life must be  
Till Gloria come to comfort me !  
My sun went down ; no hope, no light !  
Last night, last night !

## SEPARATION

### II

Now in the silent hours of the night,  
Far o'er the cold earth under northern skies,  
Nestled she lies so fragrant and so white,  
The happy pillow kissing her closed eyes.

Sleep on, my little sweet and twenty, sleep  
While all the angels guard your purity;  
And in my dreams I'll touch that scarlet lip  
That never speaks but in dear charity.

## SEPARATION

### III

THE seaweed in the dim-lit cave  
Awaits the sure returning wave ;  
The rustling corn beneath the stars  
Awaits the crimson Eastern bars ;  
When Gloria is gone I must  
Secure my peace in perfect trust.

## SEPARATION

### IV

Good fare, a happy company  
And laughter free,  
And toasts and healths, and merry jests  
And jollity.

A pushing back of chairs, farewells  
Till next we meet,  
A muffling on of coats, and then  
The moon-blanch'd street.

Night with her silent sovereignty  
Asserts her power ;  
The old church clock tolls out  
The midnight hour ;

And Jupiter looks down across  
The silver seas,  
Abetting the sweet influence of  
The Pleiades.

Ah ! did I then for one short hour  
Forget you, dear ?  
Come back then into my poor heart,  
And fill it here,—

Here in the solitary street,  
Silent and white,  
Beneath the innumerable stars  
And sacred night !

Cold moon, I gaze into your face  
With wistful eyes,  
For you can shine across the world  
Where Gloria lies.

Queen of the night, regard us both  
With kindly eye,  
And gather us to your white heart  
Benignantly.

Eternal night and everlasting  
Starry sky,  
I know not aught of what ye are  
Or what am I.

But this I know,—Love can alone  
All things restore,  
And of that love supreme ye speak  
For evermore!

## SEPARATION

### V

WHEN in the dawn awake I lie,  
Over the world my fancies fly  
To a little chamber, white and fair,  
With all I love enclosèd there ;  
And I whisper in her dainty ear,  
“ Ah, Gloria, as fair as dear,  
Come back to me ere summer’s flown ;  
Come soon, come soon ! ”

The rosy sun through casement peeping  
Can kiss her there so gently sleeping,  
Can mingle with her dream’s sweet story,  
And bathe her tender limbs in glory ;  
Ah ! happy sun ! that I were there !  
Ah, Gloria, as dear as fair,  
Come back to me ere summer’s flown ;  
Come soon, come soon !

## SEPARATION

### VI

Over the high full moon to-night  
The fleecy clouds are flying,  
The ministry of spangled frost  
Along the wet road lying;

Past midnight, and the last footfall  
Has passed my cottage door;  
Below the cliff the sleepless waves  
Break on the dreaming shore;

And far away the headlands dim  
Fade in the glimmering haze;  
The flowing tide comes brimming in,  
Deep in enchanted bays;

And the great love that throngs my heart  
Unveils all to my sight,  
And gives me soul to know and feel  
The loveliness of night!

## SEPARATION

### VII

I AWAKEN in the darkness of the night,  
And the rain and wind are roaring from the sea ;  
I stretch my arms to clasp her in affright,  
And a dread empty silence mocks at me.

'Tis said far over darkling hill and dale,  
And o'er the star-lit multitudinous main,  
Bringing its love-song like the nightingale,  
That soul can speak to soul and back again.

Yet give to me, dear Lord, what once has been :  
Two hearts together singing to one song.  
How long must earth and ocean roll between ?  
Ah ! waiting, breaking heart ! how long ? how  
long ?

## SEPARATION

### VIII

SINK, sink, red sun, into the West,  
Flash out, dim stars, upon the night,  
Roll faster round, great world, and bring  
My best belovèd to my sight !

Pass, pass, dull hours, more quickly pass  
To where the day in glory dies,  
Come love with me, mount hand in hand  
Up to the door of Paradise.

Sink, sink, red sun, into the West,  
Flash out, dim stars, upon the night,  
Roll faster round, great world, and bring  
My best belovèd to my sight !

## REUNION

### I

OVER the murky earth I sweep  
Through black night in the roaring train,  
Mile after mile, while the world's asleep,  
Up out of death to life again !

I hear her calling from afar ;  
She leans from Heaven to take my hand ;  
She rises with the morning star  
Across the waking sea and land.

Each scarlet lip a lover's choice,  
Her eyes the world's enamishment,  
And to the mortal ear her voice  
The harmony of the firmament !

Throw wide the everlasting gate,  
And lead me to love's crown and throne.  
Into your heart inviolate,  
Ah ! let me melt, belovèd one !

## REUNION

### II

Music in a rhythmic measure  
Throbbing down the corridor,  
Silk and satin, and light laughter,  
Mellow lights and polished floor.

Mazy dance whose dainty motion  
Makes fair women doubly fair,  
Jocund youth and careless beauty  
Sweeping by together there.

She is there among the dancers :  
I am there too, but unseen,  
Watching all her gracious movements,  
Gloria, my Queen, my Queen !

On her dazzling neck and shoulders,  
On her head set royally,  
On the sweet lines of her bosom,  
Falls the light caressingly.

She is mine, all mine for ever,  
Mine ! mine to the uttermost !  
And for that immortal guerdon  
I would count the world well lost !

## REUNION

### III

I'VE the cottage down out Devon way,  
With a garden and a stream,  
And a lawn with leaning apple trees  
That droop their limbs and dream.

And the robins and the thrushes  
And the little Jenny wren  
Are nesting in the bushes,  
For the spring is round again.

The nipping blasts are over,  
And the south-west wind's begun,  
And the rosebuds round the casement  
Are swinging in the sun ;

And all the world is humming  
May's rapturous high tune,  
And Gloria is coming  
To crown the pomp of June !

## LOSS

### I

VEILED by no cloud the Sovran Sun blazed from above,  
As I went up across the heath to meet my love.  
So will all Nature, smiling, mock at credulous men,  
When God resolves the world to chaos back again.  
So was it on that day, though no cold word was said,  
Yet on the instant sure I knew myself betrayed !  
A shadow swept upon the wide world, covering all  
And on my heart the darkness settled like a pall.  
Then came there through the portal of my tortured  
brain

An awful presence, on a black throne, there to reign ;  
And now at last I know, too late, that, could we  
choose,

'Tis better never to have loved than thus to lose !

## LOSS

### II

THERE'S passion in the gold kingcup,  
And a glory in the sky ;  
And the gallant Spring comes marching up  
With the love-light in his eye !

But love in May grows cold in June,  
And false before September ;  
And sweetest songs are out of tune  
Long, long before December.

And I am old and weary, dear,  
And pride must break or bend ;  
What's gone is gone for ever here  
Unto the sad world's end !

## LOSS

### III

DEAR, when I would have kissed,  
    You turned away ;  
Love's benediction missed  
    And went astray.

Surely on some far shore  
    Beyond our sky  
Is garnered evermore  
    Each lover's sigh !

Surely, though passion fail  
    In you for me,  
'Tis fit my troth prevail  
    Eternally !

Therefore for what is past—  
    Known, felt, and seen—  
I'll thank God to the last  
    That it has been !

## LOSS

### IV

FAIR daughter of a traitor race  
That took the love it ne'er returned,  
In the cold beauty of your face  
I read the fate those others learned.

Is there no spell to bring you near,  
And have I lived my life in vain ?  
Is there no word, however dear,  
To win you back to me again ?

If from the past I now must part,  
If love again can never be,  
Ah ! take your hand from off my heart,  
And may the dear Lord comfort me !

## LOSS

### V

AH ! dearest faithless one,  
Guide of my lost life's story ;  
O'er whose heart do you reign ?  
Where waste you now your glory ?

Sings he the poet's song  
To celebrate your beauty ?  
Owns he the painter's soul  
To worship as a duty ?

Will he your sweet self make  
His religion and his faith,  
Enthroning you in heaven  
Above all life and death ?

Nay ! he can never know  
All that such passion means,  
As in my heart of hearts  
I gave my Queen of Queens !

## LOSS

### VI

PAST the old haunts ! the farm upon the hill,  
The river like a thread of silver lies :  
I see the waving corn and poppies still,  
The world all gold, and Sun-god in the skies,  
Peace in the heart, and love-light in the eyes  
    Of long ago !

Past the old haunts ! past hill and farm again,  
And river like a path of silver spread :  
No sun, no corn, no golden world remain ;  
And love grows faint, and vain regret is dead :  
Pain alone stays when all the rest has fled  
    Of long ago !

## LOSS

### VII

DEAR, is it nothing—all the years  
Of an adoring love ?  
Is it nothing that I raised to you  
What saints accept above ?

When the hunger of my heart blots out  
All things in Heaven and earth,  
When I would die that you might live,  
Is it all nothing worth ?

Close down the page then, write no more,  
And let the curtain fall ;  
For life is naught, and death is naught,  
Where love is all in all.

Without a pang you take away  
All which I thought my own ;  
So here's the end : and I must fare  
Into the world alone !

## VIII

AH ! had I thought thou couldst be false  
And wear a double face,  
Or that such innocent sweet looks  
Could hide deceit so base,  
I had not given thee the life  
I cannot take again,  
Nor brought thee through the door of love  
Into my heart in vain !

But he who gave the tender soul,  
By woman to be vexed,  
Left it to bear the utmost pains  
Of this world or the next ;  
And though henceforth the Lord of Hell  
For ever be my guest,  
Yet from the Pit I'll lift my prayer  
That thou still shalt be blessed !

## LOOKING BACK

THE flowers still blow upon the hill  
Where we together stood,  
The winds sigh through the solemn trees  
In which the rooks still brood ;  
Yet all the glory of the world  
That stretches to the sea  
But celebrates my loneliness  
Since Gloria went from me.

The deep below, the sky above,  
Reck not of human ills ;  
There comes no comfort from the waves  
Nor answer from the hills.  
Careless of mortal miseries,  
Renewed from day to day,  
Taking no heed of any prayers,  
The great globe goes its way.

Yet when I stood here long ago  
And watched the flowing tide,  
The world seemed full of grace and hope  
With Gloria at my side ;  
For when we love, a deeper sight  
God's mercy yet may send,  
And what the reason still denies  
The heart may comprehend.

# **OUTWARD BOUND**

## OUTWARD BOUND

Down the Sound to the open sea,  
Fronting the south-west wind,  
With the great Atlantic rolling free,  
And our hearts left far behind ;

Over the hills and far away,  
Down in a sunny dell,  
My little sweetheart sings all day  
In a garden I know well.

Infinite space 'mid the stars above  
And below,—the infinite deep,  
Alone on the bridge I pray my love  
Will true and loyal keep.

Though wild wastes of waters roll  
Between my dear and me,  
My faith is surer than the pole,  
And deeper than the sea !

## HOMeward Bound

I love to hear the music  
Of the gale among the shrouds,  
And the roaring of the billows  
Beneath the rugged clouds,  
And the racing of the engine  
As her bows go out of sight,  
And the wailing of the eight bells  
Upon the wild midnight !

And down across the tropics,  
Where the sea's as smooth as glass,  
I love to watch the shimmer  
On the flying fish that pass.  
And o'er the starlit waters  
I gaze astern at night  
At the wake all phosphorescent  
That stretches out of sight.

But when we're sailing homeward  
And Portland Bill is passed,  
And slipping up the Solent  
We make the good ship fast,  
Then all the boasted glories  
Of distant sea and shore  
Serve but to make me love thee,  
Dear England, more and more.

## SCHEHALLION

In the fragrant strath I found you  
Up your native mountain hollow,  
Where the purple heather flowered  
    by the loch.

There your loveliness possessed me  
With a flood of deep desire,  
While we climbed the hoar Schehallion  
    through the dew.

To the west the Glencoe Shepherds,  
All around the dreaming mountains  
Lifted from the world together  
    to the skies.

Perished now, those passionate visions,  
Never, never more returning,  
Lost with that forgotten summer  
    long ago.

Now the falling hours bring me  
Vain regrets so sweet and bitter,  
Like the long roll of the wide sea  
    on my soul.

## GOOD INTENTIONS

AN evil proverb says that Hell  
Is paved with good intentions,  
Such ancient lies can only be  
The Devil's own inventions.

Though good intentions fail and fail  
Till seventy times seven,  
God takes the will for better things  
To pave the floor of Heaven.

Those who still try to struggle on  
And fall, and stagger up,  
Who sink with bleeding feet, and drink  
Remorse's bitter cup ;

Who through their prison bars can see  
The road they never trod,  
Yet through their tears gaze up toward  
The distant hills of God ;

Oh ! surely these, who to the end  
Have wished those heights to win,  
Will reach the feet of Him who still  
Forgives us all our sin.

## THE PICTURE

Oh ! that those eyes could see me,  
Oh ! that those lips could speak,  
    And give me again  
    What without pain  
I never more can seek.

There let the dream of beauty,  
Richly serenely still,  
    In a vision strange  
    That cannot change  
Its loveliness fulfil.

Now in the hallowed gloaming  
Fades the sweet face from sight.  
    But I seem to hear  
    A footfall near,  
'Twixt twilight and the night.

Oh ! that those eyes could see me,  
Oh ! that those lips could speak,  
    And give me again  
    What without pain  
I never more can seek.

## THE EMPTY HOUSE

OH, it's dreary work to start again upon the daily round

When no one waits your footstep on the floor,  
And the house is dark and empty, when you reach  
your home at night,

And not a word of welcome at the door.

And it's lonely in the daytime, and it's lonelier at night,

When sinking ashes on the fender fall,  
And while noises from the street below have slowly  
died away

You sit for hours staring at the wall.

As you touch the dear familiar things, and mark the vacant chair,

And wander round the empty rooms alone,  
You recall each tender memory with hopeless vain  
regrets,

And the sinking heart within you turns to stone.

And you think of all the loving things you long so  
much to say,—

You'd give the world the past to recreate,—  
But the door is shut upon you, and across it there is  
writ

The saddest of all human words,—“ Too late ! ”

SONGS TO DESIDERIA

## SONGS TO DESIDERIA

### I

How can you write so tenderly  
Who love from me withhold,  
With heart as inaccessible  
As Pole-Star, and as cold ?

A gentle touch, quickly withdrawn,  
A smile that comes too late,  
Glimpses of inner Paradise  
To one kept at the gate.

A word half loving taken back,  
Repulse, soul-hunger, pain,  
Then the cold shoulder of the world  
Between us once again !

Dear, from this doubting misery  
Give me my soul's release,  
Yield me your heart, and let me know  
True love's impassioned peace !

## SONGS TO DESIDERIA

### II

THEY talk of Botticelli and his mediæval saints,  
But there's none to touch my lady 'mong the angels  
that he paints,

And all his hallowed eremites are nothing to my dear  
With the shadow of a glory in the wavings of her hair.

The poets praise the Medici, that little Queen of Love,  
And other marble effigies of goddesses above.

But had they lived to look on her, they would confess,  
I swear,

That all their stone divinities were nothing to my  
dear.

Then let them keep their paintings of the faded saints  
of old

And all their graven images of Venus still and cold,  
Give me the glance of life and love in Desideria's  
eyes,

And the white wonder of her arms enclosing Paradise !

## SONGS TO DESIDERIA

### III

GIVE me, dear Lord, the patient will  
To wait without the closed door,  
To love in absence deeper still  
And trust through silence evermore.

## SONGS TO DESIDERIA

### IV

WHEN Desideria with a glance  
    My willing heart enchains,  
The raptures of a thousand springs  
    Rush tingling through my veins,  
And while the reason warns the mind  
    How false Love's beacon gleams,  
The living soul within me laughs,  
    Builds castles, and dreams dreams !

And though beside her innocence  
    My whole life seems a sham,  
Though she belongs to Paradise  
    And I—am what I am !  
Yet there's a passion in my heart  
    That prudence cannot check,  
For in a vision I have felt  
    Her arms about my neck !

## SONGS TO DESIDERIA

### V

If word of mine has brought you pain,  
Ask me not to repent,  
No speech of yours my lip could stain  
That was not reverent ;  
Should you forbid me to declare  
What cannot be unsaid,  
'Tis to condemn my life to share  
The silence of the dead.

For dwelling sanctified apart  
Where evil never trod,  
There has been gathered to your heart  
The providence of God.  
My very prayers by night and day  
Your intercession need,  
And if you now should turn away,  
Then I am lost indeed !

## SONGS TO DESIDERIA

### VI

YOU'RE just the fairest of the fair  
Down to your finger-tips ;  
Come to me, sweet and twenty-one,  
Give me your rosy lips !

To-morrow brings your birthday round,  
And till the world shall cease  
God keep you, dearest of the dear,  
And fill you with His peace.

Time works his will with both of us,  
With each in different ways,  
For you ascend while I go down  
The stairways of our days.

Alas ! for me the falling hours  
Are stealing youth away,  
I cannot feel as once I felt  
The live-long happy day.

Yet when in benediction  
Your soft eyes rest on me,  
I take again the dancing heart  
Of jocund twenty-three !

# SONGS TO DESIDERIA

## VII

WHEN every flower of the world  
Had perished in the frost,  
When every day was desolate  
And every hope was lost,  
When love was dead, and faith had failed  
And memory was pain,  
Into your own you took my heart  
And bade it live again !

And now the glory of the earth  
Is visible once more  
And visions of God's Paradise  
Through the unfolded door,  
And choirs of the cherubim  
Are chanting from above  
That till the law of death be dead  
The law of life is love !

## SONGS TO DESIDERIA

### VIII

ARE not all things elusive that are fair ?  
And difficult of access that are sweet ?  
Lest the unworthy should find entrance there  
Where timorously tread the reverent feet !  
Therefore you vanish to the land of dreams,  
A phantom of the memory night and day,  
And I am left the silent solitude  
That lingers in the chamber where you lay.  
Though you have gone, the sense of you remains,  
An exquisite thought, an aspiration fair,  
A tender vision the soul dwells upon  
And dwelling on it finds itself in prayer.

## SONGS TO DESIDERIA

### IX

WHENE'ER I hear your gentle voice  
    Speak softly in my ear,  
Life seems no more a mystery  
    But a gift great and clear ;  
And through the years while I survive,  
    The memory is mine  
Of having held my breath and felt  
    An ecstasy divine.

Yet when we parted in the gloom  
    Of that far Northern land,  
And on my shoulder tremblingly  
    You laid your tender hand,  
Without a word I went my way  
    Transfigured blessedly,  
As though an angel had passed by,  
    Touched, and absolvèd me.

For there's a love too deep for speech,  
    Too wonderful for tears,  
Recorded by the Seraphim  
    Amid the silent spheres ;  
Communion sweet of life with life  
    Each in the other blent,  
The sublimation of two souls,  
    A stainless Sacrament.

## SONGS TO DESIDERIA

### X

SOON we shall meet, and then will come to me  
Sense of your presence turning the heart faint  
With sick desire ; the little diamond  
Sparkling his passionless eye, close nestling warm  
In rapturous couch where I adventure not  
Will mock me with each tender taken breath ;  
And I shall marvel at the glories given  
To stocks and stones, while I who live and long  
May never touch those lily sanctities,—  
My throne and kingdoms in a world profane !  
And will you look above my lowly head ?  
Ah, most Adorable ! the Saints in Heaven  
Need not the benediction of your eyes  
So much as I ; and the long nights and days  
Are not enough for me to celebrate  
All the sweet reasons of my jealousy  
Till you look down with pity where I lie.

## SONGS TO DESIDERIA

### XI

WITH every day you grow in loveliness,  
The very perfect flower of the world  
Before all time divinely fore-ordained  
To be the guerdon of some King of men ;  
And though I see you in my dreams removed  
Far from me up the innumerable stairs  
Whose top is lost in glory round your feet,  
Though I may never climb up to your side,  
Yet will I dare to spread aspiring wings ;  
The shattered majesty of Icarus  
Prone on the waves magnificent appears  
Beyond fulfilled desires of lesser souls !  
And since the day when under summer skies  
The splendid vision of your beauty dawned  
Bringing a tumult of sweet thronging love,  
A mad impulse has overwhelmed my heart  
To hazard life and death for such a prize ;  
And being a man, ah ! Desideria !  
Death would be joy, oblivion ecstasy,  
Did you vouchsafe me a last sanctuary  
To breathe this world away upon your lips.

## SONGS TO DESIDERIA

### XII

LISTEN to me ! Divinest Heart of Hearts !  
Life has no meaning till love enters in.  
Probing and delving till their backs are bent  
And eyes are dimmed, the thinkers of the world  
Seek the solution of its mystery,  
But it remains ever insoluble ;  
And some go mad, and others break their hearts  
When at the last they find all spent for naught.

Ah ! if they only knew that from such fate  
One gentle hand outstretched might rescue them,  
That into their sad tangled lives, confused,  
Astray, obscure, and full of weariness,  
One lovely influence has power to heal,  
Transform, and bring in quiet thankfulness,  
Then would they surely rise up and go forth  
Among the flowers under the blue sky,  
Learning at last all that they need to learn,  
That one who loves has never lived in vain.

For Truth is of the Spirit, and descends  
Freely to poet-heart of happy lover.  
Therefore all ye who know the glorious pangs  
Of passion, unto you alone is given  
Truly to find the meaning of the world,  
The mystery of being, testifying  
That darkly without hope men wander here

Until they reach this everlasting door  
Into the House of Life, where hand in hand  
With the Belov'd upon the blazing threshold  
They hear the morning stars together sing  
And all the Sons of God shouting for joy !

## LAST SONG TO DESIDERIA

THE comforters have left me, I am alone ;

Close down the foolish page, shut the world's door ;  
Break, break, oh, desolate heart ! for she is gone,  
Gone, gone for ever, and for evermore !

Deep in the earth is Desideria laid

With a stone set at her feet and at her head ;  
All debts between my God and me are paid,  
For love is all ; and all is finished.

Come then to-night, again, oh, mighty Death,

And join my soul to hers thou hast removed ;  
Across the world there steals the tremulous breath  
Of the last infinite dawn !—I come, Belovèd.

# **FORGIVENESS**

## FORGIVENESS

HAD we nothing here to pardon,  
Nothing here to be forgiven,  
We might seem to be more perfect,  
More near to Heaven ;

But the sweetest of all virtues  
Would be taken from our lives,  
That fair flower in Love's garland  
When she forgives.

## THE WHITE ROSE

Ah ! fair white rose of Scotland,  
How many tears were shed  
To save your plighted honour,  
How many hearts have bled.

Emblem of faith and fealty  
The cold north ever brings  
To the forlorn lost causes  
And crowns of vanished kings.

Sweet as her fragrant valleys,  
Fresh as her land-locked seas,  
Free as the stormy sunsets  
Beyond her Hebrides.

True as the mother's blessing  
Who o'er the cradle leans,  
Dear as the tender bosom  
Of my own Queen of Queens.

## TO ARIEL

*(His Majesty's Theatre, February 1905)*

OH ! dainty dancer ! what rapt virginal love,  
What pure enticement fills you as you move !  
Art and sweet Nature, Nature and sweet Art,  
Blend in a subtle conquest of the heart.

Happy and ever tireless you seem  
As swallow leaping in the gold sunbeam,  
Bright as the sea's far path of fairy lights  
Laughing beneath the moon on summer nights ;  
In tender gesture linking dreams of love  
With aspirations earthly thoughts above,  
Fair echo of the harmony that steers  
The rhythmic revolution of the spheres !

## TO THE FAIR OPHELIA

*With some Flowers (at the Lyceum)*

GATHERED flowers are the fairest,  
Sweetest on their dying day,  
Giving Death their incense rarest  
As they sigh their life away !

You most sweetly win the heart  
When like these fair flowers you die,  
When life-wearied you depart  
In your cold death-bed to lie.

But, oh, flowers ! born to sorrow,  
Breathe not yet your last frail breath ;  
Live to comfort on the morrow  
Her new life with your sweet death !

## MIDNIGHT SAPPHICS

From the spent hearth the light is slowly fading,  
Pitiless winds are wailing in the chimney,  
Sorrows and fears and memory's sad phantoms  
    Crowd the dim chamber.

Fainter and fainter sink the dying embers,  
In the deep shadows rise belovèd faces,  
Voices are whispering old familiar hauntings  
    Years never silence.

See, the last flicker dies upon the hearthstone,  
Fading away till all is cold and cheerless ;  
So must the past sink down into the darkness  
    Ashes to ashes !

Hark, how the rain is beating on the windows !  
Out in the storm the houseless and forsaken  
Suffer in silence, while the howling whirlwind  
    Shows them no mercy.

High in his palace warmly lies the prelate,  
Under the hedge the wretched tramp is dying,  
Let the heart break, for, sure it is, the crooked  
    Cannot be straightened !

## THE "COMUS ROOM" IN LUDLOW CASTLE

WHERE is now the measured music  
Framed to clothe the lofty rhyme,  
Through this stately hall that echoed  
In the day of Ludlow's prime ?

Where are now the gentle ladies  
And the silken youths so gay,  
Ranged along the gorgeous hangings  
From these walls now bulged and grey ?

All are gone ! the broad roof vanished  
From which hung the swinging lights,  
Through the long drawn windows shining  
To the far-off shepherd wights.

Ruins following the poet,  
Back to earth down-crumbling slow,  
All forgetful of the glories  
That they looked on long ago.

Thoughts of passion, dreams of beauty,  
Sojourned here and fled away,  
Leaving but the skull that held them  
Bleaching in a drear decay.

Thus do all our efforts perish,  
E'en the highest and the best,  
Ruthless Time for ever turning  
Human grandeur to a jest !

## A PRAYER

LORD, for the weak and sinful do we pray,  
For those with hidden crimes upon their hearts,  
For him who stifles conscience all the day,  
But in the night at his own shadow starts !

For lonely ones with no one upon earth  
To share the burden of their misery,  
On whom no tender guiding hand from birth  
Was laid to lead their falter'ring steps to Thee.

For those who lovèd much and were betrayed,  
Left with their sinking dread alone to grieve,  
Who, in their anguish, are to pray afraid  
To Thee Who wait'st to pardon and receive.

We pray for all who have been trodden down,  
To whom the morning light no comfort brings,  
Who down the wind of this bleak world are blown,—  
Great Bearer of the burdens, King of Kings !

## ULTIMA REQUIES

Just a few hopes, just a few sighs,  
    Just a few visions of delight ;  
Just a few dreams of Paradise,  
    And kisses in the night.

Just a few friends that come and go ;  
    Brief, eager youth, and briefer age,  
The warp and woof of joy and woe,  
    And then the closèd page.

Just a few comrades in the fight  
    Shoulder to shoulder in the throng,  
Just a last struggle for the right  
    In a mad world of wrong.

Lord, grant me with my latest breath,  
    'Mid failing faiths and death's alarms,  
The still small voice, and underneath  
    The Everlasting Arms.

## THE IMMUTABLE STARS

With failing faith and dim uncertain hope,  
With lonely heart long empty of desire,  
I lifted weary eyes to Heaven and saw  
The eternal patience of the immutable stars.

## SAPPHICS IN THE NIGHT

SHORT is the night, too short for tender loving,  
Far in the West the pallid moon is dying.  
Through the tall trees there comes a stirring whisper  
In the dim twilight.

Down in the garden in their leafy ambush  
Birds are awaking with their murmurous flutings,  
While from the East a spreading veil of amber  
Heralds the morning.

Ah, soon too soon the years will come upon us  
When this imperious ecstasy will perish,  
Then let us drink the cup of sweet desire  
With hurried passion !

## SONG OF THE COLONIAL TROOPS

THROUGH the glory of the morning  
We are marching to the fight  
From the darkness left behind us  
On into the rising light.  
Out upon the far horizon  
We can hear the bullets sing,  
There we'll strike, and live or die  
for England's King.

Through the burden of the noonday  
High we lift our flags of war,  
Foot by foot we struggle onward  
To the goal that lies before.  
For the right with swords uplifted  
Round the world our hosts we bring,  
For the dear old country's sake  
and England's King.

When the long-fought day is over  
And the sun sinks to his rest,  
When the smoke and dust of battle  
Fade into the golden West,  
Then a thousand thousand veterans  
To the sky this anthem fling,  
“Glory be to Freedom's throne  
and England's King ! ”

## AT THE WELL AT JOPPA

DOWN by the well at Joppa once I lingered  
Watching the Sun descend into the ocean ;—  
Lovely and tall and lifting high her pitcher  
on her fair forehead,  
Proud with the blood of countless generations  
And the repose of all her Eastern fathers,  
Onward she came until she stood beside me  
gently expectant.  
No word we spoke, for we had none in common,  
Only by signs I told her I had travelled  
Far over weary sea and land to meet her  
here at the well-head.  
Down, down she swung the vessel to the water,  
Dripping she brought it to the sun-dried margin,  
Then with grave gesture offered me the nectar  
there in the twilight  
Round her fair neck I hung a beaded necklace,  
On to my lips she laid a tender greeting,  
Then turned and passed from out my life for ever  
through the dark shadows.

## SWANAGE BAY

THE evening light is on the sea,  
Down in the old old town  
The church bells sound across the bay,  
And the great Sun goes down.

Far out across the peaceful sea,  
Out to the boundless main,  
The great ship carries some who nc'er  
Will see their home again.

The dusk is stealing o'er the waves,  
Faint comes the evening bell,  
A trace of smoke, and all is gone !  
Farewell, brave hearts, farewell !

## DUST, UNTO DUST

DUST unto dust ! how soon shall I have vanished !  
Never again to write the tender love-song,  
Never again to see the moon uprising  
in the dark garden.

Never again to hear the quiet murmur  
Made by the water running through the sluice-gate,  
While the white mist lies softly o'er the meadows  
round the old homestead.

Life is the frailest of all earthly visions,  
Soon all is lost except the poet's verses,  
Gods and their temples sink to common ruin,  
nothing to nothing !

Ah ! but perhaps when I am long forgotten  
Some verse of mine may linger down the ages,  
Keeping your loveliness still to be desired  
by unborn lovers.

FINIS